# THE MAYOR'S REPORT



Thank you to the Veterans of Bladensburg and Happy Veterans Day!

(Photo taken during the Veterans Day Celebration on 11/11/2017 at the Bladensburg World War I Memorial Peace Cross)

**November 13, 2017** 

# Mayor Takisha James November 2017 Community Report

# A Meetings & Events

# 1. Meeting with Senator Joanne C. Benson (Democrat, District 24):

I had a productive meeting with Senator Benson regarding the Baltimore-Washington Superconducting Maglev Project. We discussed our plan to organize a community meeting to allow residents to learn about the project from the project developers as well as from the community advocates perspectives. The meeting will also have a question and answer period where residents will be able to submit questions for the developers and advocates. Senator Benson has been a tremendous citizen's advocate on this issue and has agreed to assist with supporting the meeting to discuss this important issue in Bladensburg. *Next steps:* 

Working to identify a date and location for the meeting.

Getting in touch with individuals that Senator Benson identified as key partners to represent the advocate side of this issue.

Contacted representatives from Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR) and they are committed to participating.

# 2. Meeting with Pepco

Held an introductory meeting with Tony Ruffin, Senior External Affairs Specialist at Pepco. The purpose of the meeting was for me to meet our representative and begin understanding existing projects in the area as well as to raise questions about the Pepco lines in Bladensburg. Public Works conducted an assessment of double poles within the town, so I was able to share that list along with the locations for each of the double poles. I'm awaiting an update on how they'll be able to provide support for removing the extra poles. Given that a few residents have asked about burying the power lines, I inquired as to what this would entail for the town. I was informed that the cost for burying the power lines is incredibly expensive. For example to bury 6 miles of power lines would cost roughly \$16,000,000 as compared to \$1,000,000 if those same power lines were installed above the ground. I also learned that the reliability is not significantly greater than the above ground power lines. Additionally the cost to repair underground wires can be very expensive given that you have to dig to get to the wires and depending upon the location of the issue impair traffic during repairs. Traffic also becomes a problem during the construction phase of burying power lines and there are also environmental issues that must be considered before you can go into the ground with these powerful lines.

#### **Next steps/Additional Info:**

Work with Public Works to have assessments of two additional issues:

- 1.) Poles in sidewalks
- 2.) Leaning poles- (During the meeting I was able to show two examples of the leaning poles to help convey the reason for concern.)

Once the assessments are completed, the list will be shared with Pepco for review and repair.

Residents Please Note: Pepco has a Customer Advocate Group that is helpful in resolving issues related to your account. If you aren't getting the necessary assistance with your account, you may visit: http://www.pepco.com/community-commitment/be-a-good-community-partner/office-of-the-customer-advocate/ or email <a href="mailto:customeradvocate@pepco.com">customeradvocate@pepco.com</a>.

#### 3. Peace Cross Meeting

The Council held a Special Town Council Meeting to discuss the Peace Cross Memorial on Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. This meeting was scheduled to provide a history of the memorial to the community and also allow residents to share their perspectives on the matter. The feedback from residents was overwhelmingly in favor of keeping this important memorial in Bladensburg as part of our memorial park. This meeting was helpful in allowing the Council to hear from the community. Given the ongoing litigation, M-NCPPC (Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission) was not able to send a representative to the meeting.

# 4. Port Towns Legislative Dinner

The Annual event was held on Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> and had a different format which allowed more dialogue than in the past through roundtable discussion. The topics that were discussed were:

**Roundtable #1**: Highway Improvements to include the intersection at the Peace Cross Memorial and continue higher priority of funding for analysis of pedestrian friendly highways in the Port Town communities. Support for the proposed funding and construction of safety infrastructure along the Anacostia Tributary Trail.

**Roundtable #2**: Increase the Planning and Zoning authority for the Port Town's communities in Prince George's County.

**Roundtable #3**: Increase the funding for the Maryland Energy Administration's Weatherization program which benefits Port Towns homeowners by providing grant funding for the installation of energy conservation materials for low to moderate income residents. To explore and provide grant funding to provide solutions for homelessness.

**Roundtable #4**: Municipal Broadband (a PGCMA Legislative Priority). Explore and provide wi-fi accessibility for all residents in the Port Towns.

**Roundtable #5**: Non-profit Discussion. Designed for our non-profit partners to have a discussion with County and State agency representatives, and legislators on issues impacting their organizations.

The notes are being compiled so they can be forwarded up to our county and state government officials for further consideration and action.

## 5. Annual Veterans Day Program

The American Legion Post #131 and Bladensburg Patriotic Committee Chair, Renee Green, held this celebration on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am. The ceremony was well attended by residents, elected officials and most importantly, our local veterans. The keynote speaker was Steven Brenner, P.G. County Commander. We were especially honored to have Congressman Anthony Brown (D-04) join us and give remarks.

### **Upcoming Meetings/Events**

- Victory Grace Church will hold their annual giveaway for Thanksgiving at 9am on Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup> at Bladensburg High School.
- The Town of Bladensburg will host our homeless and underprivileged residents for a Thanksgiving meal at the Mango Café Restaurant from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.
- Town of Bladensburg Yule Log and Holiday Party Friday, December 8, 2017 at 6:00 – 8:00 PM
- Next Mayor and Council Meeting Monday, December 11, 2017
  - Work Session at 5:30PM / Televised Council Meeting at 7:00PM